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The Ghost Of The Past.

'Tis a dream that we dreamed in the long ago,
In some far away time and place;
A voice that comes to us, strangely low,
Through the realms of an infinite space:
'Tis a longing for something that stands afar,
And mocks at our nameless pain,
A cry that the days that we wasted once,
Were ours to live again.

There's a rift in the cloud that lies between
The past and the days that are,
Through which we may dimly discern each scene
That was ours to make or to mar;
There's a wish unuttered, and half repressed,
That the haunting vision would fade,
And leave us unfettered to live in the "now"
And the thoughts of the "then" evade.

For with every joy that its presence brings
Comes also a throb of pain,
An anguish mute that persistent clings,
Like a soulless, dull refrain;
And we know not whether to joy or to grieve,
When it comes to us o'er and o'er;
For the ghost of the past must forever live,
But the substance never more.

